



**ANDERSON COUNTY
LIBRARY SYSTEM**

Strategic Plan 2022-2025



Vision

The library is community-driven and innovative, providing essential resources, services, and spaces.

Mission Statement

The Anderson County Library System is dedicated to providing access to information of all types and facilities for education, recreation, and personal development to the County's residents, without regard to race, gender, creed, age or location. We are committed to freedom of access for all, offering a forum for ideas.



Introduction

Organizations implement Strategic Planning to bring a sense of focus to the mission and tailor services to meet the needs of the community. It has been several years since the Anderson County Library has engaged in the full process of gathering information and rewriting goals. In that time, many of the people in leadership roles have changed within the organization, bringing in new ideas and direction. The pandemic also shed light on the changing needs of the community and the role of the library, as it brought into focus those things we find most important.



Strategic Planning can be a very involved process that includes getting feedback from those within and outside the organization. To begin the process, we looked at examples of Strategic Planning from other libraries who had done it recently. The key pieces of advice from those libraries were to try and meet patrons where they are, and to understand they have busy schedules. Obtaining information needed to be quick and easy to have the most participation. To that end we implemented a Strategic Planning Lite Process that included the following tasks:



- SWOT analyses by library staff and departments
- Asking patrons a “Question of the Day” in the libraries and on social media
- Digital survey sent by email and available on the library’s website
- Targeted feedback from stakeholders
- Community input meeting

Core Values

- Community engagement and partnerships
- Intellectual freedom and access to information and materials
- Excellence in our people, teamwork, and leadership
- Exploration and experiential learning
- Enrichment through diverse and well-rounded collections and programs
- Innovation



Key Takeaways

The information collected from the staff and patrons was analyzed and categorized in a methodical way. Library leadership spent a good deal of time evaluating and discussing the data to determine goals and objectives to address community needs. Here are just a few of the results.

99%
of patrons agree
that the library is
for everyone

Why? Survey respondents said because the library serves everyone, because there are events for children and all ages, it's public, and it's free.

Quote: "I couldn't afford to own all the books the library has loaned me and without the library I would have missed out on hours of reading joy."

96%
agree the library
has the materials
they want and are
easy to find

99%
of patrons agree
that the library is
important to them
and their family

Why? Reasons provided included providing books, computers, learning and research, and saving money.

More than just books

These are the most popular programs patrons responded to attending:

1. Storytime and children's events
2. Book clubs
3. Summer Reading
4. Computer Classes
5. Arts & Crafts

The Library had over 400 free programs for children, teens, families and adults in 2021!

Quote: "My interactions with the library staff in Anderson County have been extraordinary... I have lived in many other parts of the world, and have interacted with other libraries (be they university, county, city, etc) and have not had as overwhelmingly good experience, consistently, as I have had in the past 7 years with Anderson County staff."



Goals

After analyzing and reviewing the data, library leadership identified four key areas, or goals, to design specific outcomes that met the needs of the community and the library.

Outreach and Advocacy

- Reach nonusers and turn them into engaged library users.
- Instill a sense of library importance and value in our community.
- Increase and strengthen community partnerships.



Quote: “The library is one of the last free places that is safe for families and the community to gather and read, explore different topics, attend classes, and activities.”

Patron Experience

- Patrons experience consistent and convenient service.
- Everyone will feel welcomed, valued, and included at all libraries.
- Patrons can get the materials they want, in the formats they want, and discover new things.



Quote: “I enjoy the community, I love being able to walk in and have a sense of belonging. The staff are very nice and helpful and the library is just a place I can relax.”

Engage Our Team

- Hire and maintain a diverse, engaged staff.
- Staff have the training, tools, and resources they need to provide knowledgeable, compassionate public service.
- Communication is clear and consistent at every level of the library.



Quote: “The Anderson County Library is the biggest asset that our community has. Inside and out, top to bottom, contents to personnel, it is the most appealing institution we have.”

Innovation

- Encourage creative effort from all staff to share new ideas. Provide recognition from leadership for current and future integrated work.
- Expand selection and availability for non-traditional materials for checkout and experiential learning.
- Examine community needs to create and improve engaging programs at every level.



Quote: “[The library has] access to everything that we need, professional helpful staff, and [is] always seeking ways to make things better for the community.”

A Note From the Director

If you know me even a little, you know I'm a total planner. I like to be prepared and know what's coming. My staff joke that I'm a master scheduler. It's true - give me a good schedule any day! But with all that being said, taking on strategic planning and creating a plan for the next three years was a daunting task. The past few years have been rife with change (as we all know) and how are we to know what's to come? But it was exactly because of these changes and the changes we've seen in how our community uses the Library, that we needed to move forward with a new plan.



I was absolutely thrilled with the response we received from the community to our questions and our surveys! So many took the time to give us their thoughts and honest feedback, and it is so appreciated. Knowing that 99% of the responses agreed the Library is for everyone is music to a Library Director's ears. It means we've been doing the good work a Public Library is charged with and our patrons value it.

Moving forward, I believe the goals we created from the information gathered are indicative of both the Library's priorities and of our communities. I'm excited to be able to share our focus over the next three years and to point towards continued growth! Know that we will continue to work hard to meet the needs of our patrons, to create new and passionate library users, and to be innovative in our efforts. As always, hope to see you at the Library!

Sincerely,

Annie Sutton
Library Director

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